

Looking, Speaking, and Behaving Professionally in the Real World and Online

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fred Kitchens', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

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Abstract

Professionalism does not just cover behavior or dress. Professionals need to be aware of changes in fashions, social situations, communications, and social networking. Men have been taught professionalism for centuries in business. Since women have not been in the professional workforce to the extent that men have, they may not know what they should wear, or how to behave. This guide outlines professional dress, dinners, communication, and social network etiquette to teach or reteach both men and women what is expected of them in a professional environment. It serves as a fundamental understanding and much more can be said about each of these topics. Professionalism and etiquette may vary from industry to industry and company to company. This guide provides a basic, yet detailed, professional code of conduct.

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I would like to thank Dr. Fred Kitchens for advising me through this project. His help during the semester provided me with many resources to complete my thesis and presentation that I feel other professors could not offer.

Author's Statement

I chose to write a guide about professionalism to not only help myself but other students, faculty, and staff. Ball State University's Career Center has a lot of resources that cover these topics, but they did not have one document that covered several in detail. I also wanted to include information from other career centers and sources to provide an even more detailed guide. I did not see any information about social network etiquette on the Career Center's links and pages, which has become a hot topic in professionalism. I wanted to include that information to warn students, faculty, and staff how to properly use social network websites to maintain a professional appearance. Included with this thesis is a copy of my thesis presentation, Social Networking Etiquette. This topic was chosen for the presentation because the audience was mostly students, who typically use these sites on a daily basis. I knew this thesis would be helpful to me as a professional, but this document can also be helpful to Ball State University students, faculty, staff and any other person who requests a copy or has access to Bracken Library.

While interviews and resumes are an important part of professionalism and etiquette, I chose to briefly mention the topics in my thesis. I covered dress for interviews, but including more information specific to interviews would result in a very large document. Interviews will differ based upon the company and industry standards. Resume creation is based upon personal preferences, personal experience, and industry standards. I did not feel that I could adequately cover the topic in this guide and the Ball State University business class ISOM 249 already covers this topic. For the sake of academic integrity, I did not want to copy the information taught in that class. Anyone can find a wealth of information on the Internet and in libraries about resumes and interview tips and questions if they are interested in the subject.

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Professional Attire

Two professionals from the same field will likely give two related, but different opinions about how to dress professionally. It can be confusing when shopping for suits and professional attire because the fashion industry provides many options. The requirements can be very conservative in some professions and very liberal in others. Some professions provide uniforms while others leave it up to the individual to decide. Look at what other professionals in the field are wearing to get an idea of how to dress. This can be done by observing interviewers, potential coworkers, and supervisors wear at on-site interviews and professional events.

When to Dress Professionally

Professional dress applies to the following people and careers.

Events/Professions

- Interviewers and interviewees
- Lawyers
- Plaintiffs, defendants, and other people in court
- Television professionals:
 - News anchors
 - Television hosts
- Public speakers
- Consultants
- Meeting planners
- Government employees:
 - Federal, state, city, and county officials
 - Law enforcement professionals that are not required to wear uniforms
- Politicians
- Professionals:
 - Accountants
 - Engineers
 - Executive and management level professionals
 - Finance professionals
 - Marketing and sales professionals
 - Public relations professionals
 - Real estate professionals
 - Staffing professionals
- School and college Administrators
- Anyone who needs to project a refined, credible image.

(Yasko-Magnum, 2007, 41-42)

If a particular profession or a related one of interest is not in the list on the previous page, it is always appropriate to ask a professional in the field which professional attire is appropriate.

Remember, professional attire will vary between industries and even between companies in the same industry.

Interviewees

It is imperative to dress professionally for interviews. Wearing a suit shows interviewers from first glance that the interviewee considers it is a professional meeting. Men and women should wear a two-piece matched suit (jacket and pants) with a buttoned shirt to an interview (Virginia, 2011b). The suit should be a solid color or have a subtle weave or plaid pattern. These patterns are safest because they will look solid from across a room (Virginia, 2011b). The most conservative colors for suits are navy and dark gray, but also black for women (Virginia, 2011b). “Wool, wool blends, or other good quality natural and synthetic fibers, are generally the best fabrics in all seasons” and to “avoid lower quality acetate/rayon blends” (Virginia, 2011b, paragraph 2). The rest of the Professional Dress section describes guidelines in greater detail for first men, and then women.

Men

Men have been dressing professionally for centuries. Over this time, a standard dress code has developed globally. By following the guidelines listed in the men’s subsections, individuals will be dressed for success in most business environments.

Suits

The most conservative suit is a single-breasted wool or wool-blend suit (Ball, 2007). “Double-breasted [jacket] styles are trendier” (Ball, 2007, 8). The Men’s Wearhouse website says that single-breasted jackets have one row of one to four buttons down the front (MW, 2011). Double-breasted jackets have two rows of buttons and the jacket lapels overlap (MW, 2011). The most common style is a single-breasted jacket with two or three buttons (MW, 2011). A tall, slender man may be able to successfully wear a four-button jacket. Never fasten the bottom button on a two or three button jacket. It prevents wrinkles and the bottom button from popping of when sitting down. Conservative suits are usually navy and dark gray and may or may not have pinstripes (Ball, 2007). Black and other colors in neutral muted plaids and tweeds are acceptable alternatives (Ball, 2007). Because black is the typical color for formal tuxedos, black suits can be seen as too flashy for the professional environment (TEKsystems, 2011). The following page has three examples of professional suit jackets styles and colors.



Figure 1 Single-Breasted Plaid



Figure 2 Single-Breasted Solid



Figure 3 Double-Breasted Pinstripe

The look and fit of a suit is also an important detail when dressing for success. All clothing should be free of holes and wrinkles. If the jacket is too big, it wrinkles vertically. If it too small, the jacket will wrinkle horizontally. Suit size is determined by the circumference of the chest and height (MW, 2011). The chest circumference determines the jacket size and height determines the length associated with the suit (MW, 2011). "Short suits are appropriate for men between 5'5" and 5'8" tall, regular for 5'9" to around 6'0", long for 6'0" to 6'2", and extra-long for men between 6'3" and 6'5" (MW, 2011, paragraph 1). Any man over 6'7" may require a specialized suit for tall men (MW, 2011). Besides the length of the full suit, other measurements are taken to determine jacket and pant size.

If a man is considered to be average build, the jacket size is typically six inches larger than the pant waist size (MW, 2011). Of course not every man is average build. Executive-cut suit jackets are only two to four inches larger than the slacks to accommodate men that have a larger belly in proportion to their chest (MW, 2011). The slacks of the suit should fit at the natural waist, which is between the bellybutton and hipbone (MW, 2011). The hem of the slacks should reach the shoe (MW, 2011). "A slight break, where the hem hits midway between the top and sole of the shoe, is the go-to choice for most men" (MW, 2011, paragraph 4). From a side view of the shoe, midway between the top and sole so the shoe is where the hem of the pant leg ends. If the pants reach this point, then the fabric that touches the front of the shoe will crease. A break creates a light crease near the bottom of the slacks due to the length of the pants and the point at which they touch the top of the shoe. A full break, or a deep crease, is suggested for tall men and no break near the hem of the pant leg can make a trendy look as well (MW, 2011). If the pants do not break, make sure they are an appropriate length. When fitted for a suit, men can wear their dress shoes to decide which break they prefer.

The best advice for purchasing a suit would be to ask a sales associate to take measurements. Men's Wearhouse automatically does this when customers come to the store to purchase a suit. The sales associates find the correct fit for a particular customer's build. Slacks tend to wear out faster than jackets, so it is wise to purchase several pairs of matching slacks to

replace worn out slacks (MW, 2011). To prevent different wear patterns in the pieces, only wear suit pants with the suit jacket instead of separately. Also, have both pieces dry cleaned together. It may be advisable to have a suit tailor-made, but then it can be more expensive to replace a piece. It may be cheaper to buy a suit off the rack for professionals with fairly average body proportions. A professional shirt should also be purchased to wear with the suit.

Shirts

The best fabric for professional shirts worn with a suit is a traditional cotton or cotton-blend long sleeve, collared shirt (Ball, 2007). “The sleeves should measure about one inch below [the] wrist bone and show about a quarter-inch beyond [the] suit sleeve” (MW, 2011, paragraph 6). The collar should either be straight or have buttons (Ball, 2007). Two fingers should fit between the neck and collar (MW, 2011). A professional man should have fifteen dress shirts, or three weeks’ worth, to have at least a week’s worth of clean shirts (MW, 2011). At least half should be solid white or solid blue to make it easier to pair with ties (MW, 2011). After men have the basics, then they can choose different patterns and textures (MW, 2011). The most conservative colors are white and light blue (Ball, 2007). Pinstripe and chalk-stripe shirts are more appropriate for less conservative situations (Ball, 2007). Collared shirts should always be tucked into the waistband of the pants. The collared shirt tails are usually curved so that the shirt will stay tucked in when sitting and moving around (MW, 2011). The employees at a suit store will generally recommend a shirt and tie when selling suits.

Ties

A professional man is expected to know how to tie his own tie. The easiest knot is the half-Windsor. Other acceptable knots are the four-in-hand knot and the full-Windsor knot. The knot should fit the width of the collar on the dress shirt (MW, 2011). The Windsor knots are more symmetrical and look more professional (MW, 2011). The four-in-hand knot is more asymmetrical than the other tie knots, so the collar of the shirt should be used to help cover the asymmetry. Examples of the knots are shown in Figure 4 below. Some knots will be more asymmetrical than others. Adjust the knot or cover the asymmetry with the collar for a more professional appearance. The fabric of the tie might make it hard to make a symmetric knot.



Figure 4 Tie Knots

A full-Windsor knot is a triangular knot that is thicker and wider than other knots. It projects confidence and is a good knot for presentations, interviews, court appearances and other events (MW, 2011). The steps below demonstrate how to tie a full-Windsor knot.

- “1) Start with the wide end of [the] necktie on the right, extending about 12 inches below the narrow end on the left.”
- 2) Then cross the wide end over the narrow end.
- 3) Bring the wide end up through the loop between the collar and tie.
- 4) Then bring the wide end back down.
- 5) Pull the wide end underneath the narrow end and to the right, back through the loop and to the right again so that the wide end is inside out.
- 6) Bring the wide end across the front from right to left.
- 7) Then pull the wide end up through the loop again.
- 8) Bring the wide end down through the knot in front.
- 9) And -- using both hands -- tighten the knot carefully and draw it up to the collar.”

(Polil, 2011)

Silk is the best fabric for ties, but polyester that looks like silk is an acceptable substitute (Ball, 2007). To prolong the life of ties, untie them after wear and hang them up (MW, 2011). Repetitive patterns like polka-dot and paisley are acceptable patterns for traditional professions, such as law, business, and accounting. Other professions may accept more trendy floral patterns. Avoid novelty ties because they do not compliment a professional look as well as solid and subtle print ties (Ball, 2007). The ties below are examples of acceptable styles, colors, and fabrics.



Figure 5 Striped Silk



Figure 6 Solid Silk



Figure 7 Geometric Silk

A tie usually measures 58 inches in length and 3½ inches at its widest point (MW, 2011). If individuals prefer a skinny tie, they should choose one that is at least 2¼ wide (MW, 2011). When tied, the tie should just reach the belt buckle and the tail should fit in the lapel loop on back (MW, 2011). For men over six feet, a 62-inch, extra-long tie will ensure that the tie reaches the belt buckle (MW, 2011). Again, the sales associate will be able to help in deciding which tie fits best.

Shoes

Shoes should be made of leather or simulated leather and should lace up (Ball, 2007). The laces should not be broken or frayed and the edging of the shoes should not be faded (Ball, 2007). Shoes should also be shined to maintain a professional appearance (Ball, 2007). Dark colors like black, dark brown, and cordovan are most appropriate (Ball, 2007). Shoes should match the belt that is worn with the suit (Ball, 2007). Loafers are more appropriate for business casual attire. Figures 8, 9, and 10 below demonstrate appropriate professional shoes for men.



Figure 8 Cordovan Wingtips



Figure 9 Black Lace-up



Figure 10 Brown Lace-up

Socks

Dress socks should be worn with suits. Socks should match the color of pants or shoes (Virginia, 2011b). The best pattern is a solid, but conservative argyle (diamond-pattern) would also be appropriate (Virginia, 2011b). Socks should be long enough to reach at least mid-calf to cover the leg when sitting (Virginia, 2011b).

Jewelry

Purchase a quality watch, such as a Rolex, to wear with a professional suit. Watches are always an acceptable accessory when dressing for success. Wedding rings and other conservative men's rings are also acceptable (Ball, 2007). Bracelets and earrings are a casual look and should be avoided during interviews and at work (Ball, 2007). For facial piercings, do not wear that jewelry to the interview or job unless it is known to be acceptable or not (North Dakota State University Career Center, 2011c). For most professions, facial jewelry is unacceptable in professional settings. For more about piercings, see the Body Art section for men and women.

Hair and Nails

Of course, personal hygiene is important in any profession. Professional men should have clean hair, nails, and facial hair (Ball, 2007). Short hairstyles are the most conservative (Ball, 2007). Facial hair should be groomed daily and mustaches should be well above the upper lip (Ball, 2007). Hair color should also be conservative (NORTH, 2011c). Nails should be clean, well groomed, and a moderate length (Ball, 2007). Generally men do not wear nail polish and it should not be worn in a professional environment.

Women

Professional attire for women offers many more style choices. Women do not have a strict, classic professional style like men, making it important to exercise good judgment when creating a professional wardrobe. The building blocks of a professional wardrobe should mimic the classic styles of a man's suit. However, there can be many more options for women to choose from when building their professional wardrobe.

Suits

Due to seasonal fashions, women have more flexibility in their dress choices. For interviews and most professions, the best suit choices for women are a skirt suit, pant suit, or tailored dress (Ball, 2007). As with men, two-piece matched suits are the best choice for a woman's suit. When choosing skirt suits and dresses, make sure the hem is very near to the knee (Ball, 2007). Make sure it is not too high above the knee. Longer skirts may be acceptable, but generally skirt suits are knee-length. Any slits should be small in the back of the garment (Virginia, 2011b). For pant suits, the pants should be creased and fit appropriately; they should not be too tight or too loose (Virginia, 2011b). The pant suit is the best choice for getting in and out of vehicles throughout the day (Virginia, 2011b). Conservative, classic styles are good choices because they are more versatile (Ball, 2007). The best fabrics are light wool or wool gabardine (Ball, 2007). The best colors are neutral colors, such as black, brown, gray, and other dark colors. The most professional pattern is solid, followed by houndstooth, tweed, and plaid (Ball, 2007). Again, fit is important. If the jacket wrinkles vertically, it is too large. If it wrinkles horizontally, it is too tight. Women can also have suits tailor-made to ensure proper fit. Figures 11, 12, and 13 below demonstrate acceptable professional attire outfits for women: a skirt suit, a pant suit, and a tailored dress.



Figure 11 Skirt Suit



Figure 12 Pant Suit



Figure 13 Tailored Dress

Shirts

Women also have more versatility in shirts than men. Women can wear a collared shirt, dress shirt, or sweater underneath their suit jacket. Shirts should not be too tight or too loose. The same rules for the fit of a jacket fit apply to shirts. The best color choice for an interview would be a white or light blue conservative collared shirt with buttons (Ball, 2007). If the shirt has a print, it should be small and not noticeable from across the room (Virginia, 2011b). A long sleeve shirt would be best, but women's fashion does not always make it easy to find one. Three-quarters length and short sleeved button up shirts can be professional as long as they meet the other guidelines stated above. Despite style, the shirt should cover all cleavage (Virginia, 2011b). If it does not, wear a coordinating camisole underneath to cover it. Examples of shirts are shown in Figures 14, 15, and 16 below.



Figure 14 White Collared Shirt



Figure 15 Blue Collared Shirt



Figure 16 Long-Sleeve Top

As a general rule, shirts should be tucked into the pants in a professional environment. If the shirt falls below the jacket of the suit, tuck it in. Some shirts are cut high and are not meant to be tucked in. If the shirt will stay tucked in, tuck it in. However, if the bottom is covered by the jacket, it may be acceptable to leave it un-tucked if it does not show. To look the most professional, tuck in all shirts when wearing a business suit.

Shoes

The most professional shoes are leather-closed toe pumps with heels that measure one to two inches (Ball, 2007). Shoes should be a conservative color that compliments the suit (Ball, 2007). Unless in the fashion industry, do not try to make a statement with shoe color during an interview or on the first few days of the job. Avoid stilettos, platform shoes, and shoes that are difficult to comfortably wear all day (Virginia, 2011b). Shoes should be comfortable to wear because individuals may have to stand for extended periods of time throughout the day throughout the day (Virginia, 2011). Examples of professional shoes for women are shown in figures 17, 18, and 19 on the next page.



Figure 17 Black Leather Pump



Figure 18 Brown Microfiber Pumps



Figure 19 Black Patent Leather Pump

Socks/Hosiery

Generally, socks are not worn with high heels, although current fashion trends allow it. For the professional environment, wear socks only with shoes that cover the entire foot. No-show socks are also available that cover just the toes and heel and are a great alternative for women who want to keep their feet dry or warm. Women can also wear nice flats in a professional environment as long as they are a conservative color and style. As with heels, it is best to wear socks with shoes that cover the entire foot or no-show socks.

It is always safe to wear pantyhose, which is a must when wearing a dress or suit in an interview or on the job (Ball, 2007). Choose a plain sheer in a neutral color that compliments the suit (Virginia, 2011b). Hosiery would be preferred to no-show socks. Avoid patterned hosiery and hosiery that highly contrast with suit color (Virginia, 2011b).

Jewelry

Jewelry can be a nice complement to a professional outfit, as long as it is worn in moderation. Women should not wear dangling earrings, lots of rings, or noisy bracelets (Ball, 2007). If the jewelry moves a lot or makes noise, it can be distracting during interviews or meetings with clients. Instead, choose small earrings and simple necklaces (Ball, 2007). Conservative watches are also appropriate (Virginia, 2011b). The best choices of jewelry are gold, silver, and pearl (Ball, 2007). Wearing jewelry in facial or body piercings is probably not appropriate in any professional environment. Ask a professional in the field about general rules. More information on piercings can be found in the Body Art section for men and women. Also, look to female coworkers or company dress code manuals to gain insight on the best choices for a particular company.

Accessories

Women also have more choices than men when it comes to accessories. Handbags, belts, and scarves should be conservative and compliment the professional outfit (Ball, 2007). Avoid extreme patterns and colors (Ball, 2007). The handbag/purse should be versatile enough to coordinate with many outfits (Ball, 2007). Furthermore, “purse color should coordinate with shoes” (Virginia, 2011b, paragraph 3). Leather briefcases are a great alternative to a purse (Virginia, 2011b). Avoid large purses, party purses, and little girl type purses (Virginia, 2011b). Most importantly, accessories should not stand out more than the person wearing them.

Makeup

Apply makeup to enhance features while creating a natural look. (Ball, 2007). Even for women that don't normally wear makeup, a little can make a women look more polished when dressed professionally (Virginia, 2011b). As with clothing choices, avoid extreme colors and patterns.

Nails

Nails should be clean, well groomed, and a moderate length (Ball, 2007). Choose natural nail polish colors and styles, such as the French tip. Fake nails are acceptable if they are of moderate length and are painted appropriately.

Hair

Short hairstyles are always professional (Ball, 2007). Long hair should be pulled back from the face (Ball, 2007). Professional women should pick hairstyles that fit the face, lifestyle, profession, and personality (Ball, 2007). When dyeing hair, choose colors close to the natural hair color. Bleached-out hair looks sloppy (Ball, 2007). Hair should always be clean, neat, and groomed (Ball, 2007). The next section has more information about hair color and body art for men and women.

Men and Women: Body Art

Body art is defined as “eyebrow, nose, tongue or lip piercings, visible tattoos and alternative hairstyles/color” (North, 2011c). Although body art does not necessarily make people less professional, it is best to keep body art to a minimum (North, 2011c). Research the company to see if they have a dress code or specific policies regarding body art. North Dakota State University's Career Center website recommends general guidelines listed below.

- Keep jewelry to the least amount possible.
- Wear only one ring per hand.
- Try to limit piercings, by taking them out or wearing clear spacers.
- Wear conservative (small) earrings.
- If tattoos can be covered, do so, especially if they can be seen as offensive.
- Keep hair color looking natural (black, brunette, blonde, auburn, grey, etc.).
- Hair should be well trimmed, clean, and neat no matter the style.
- If nail polish is worn, pick non-extreme colors, like clear or light pinks.

(North, 2011c)

The website also provides some comments from employers. One of the main themes from the comments is to conceal tattoos and piercings for interviews (North, 2011c). Hiring managers are usually from a demographic where tattoos and piercings are unacceptable (North, 2011c). Also, conceal body art if it can be seen as offensive by employers, coworkers, or clients (North,

2011c). If the tattoo or piercing is distracting, cover it. The majority of employers allow one piercing per ear for women and no piercings for men (North, 2011c). Out of all the responses, the majority of employers said tattoos should be covered and jewelry in any piercings other than women's ears should not be worn (North, 2011c). Policies will differ from company to company, but generally these guidelines are the standard.

If a tattoo is visible with a full suit on, it would be best to conceal it with tattoo cover-up cream or a bandage. Facial tattoos are never a good idea. McDonald's won't even hire individuals with tattoos on their faces. Wear a turtleneck or long sleeve shirt to cover neck and arm tattoos. If McDonald's doesn't accept tattoos, most professions will not, as seen by the employer responses in the previous paragraph. As for facial and multiple ear piercings, some companies may allow employees to wear clear spacers, but most will probably ask employees to remove any jewelry at work (North, 2011c). Also, reconsider gauging ears because holes in ears will look odd without jewelry.

Conclusion for Men and Women's Professional Dress

Professional dress varies from industry to industry and company to company. This guide has outlined the most conservative professional dress, which is always acceptable in professional environments. Beginning a professional job provides the opportunity to see what other professionals are wearing and individuals can add pieces to their wardrobe accordingly. However, at the beginning of a career, it is important to wear the conservative basics and then work up to different styles depending on what the company expects and allows.

Business Casual Attire

Business casual offers professionals a lot more freedom in the styles and fabrics they can choose. One of the first rules of business casual dress is that clothes should be neatly ironed (Ball, 2007). Business casual dress should still look professional even though it is not a suit. “Cotton, linen, corduroy, rayon, and even denim can be appropriate” for a business casual wardrobe (Ball, 2007, 10). Imagine sitting on the couch watching television for hours in the outfit. If it is likely, the outfit would not be an appropriate version of business casual (Ball, 2007). While some companies say that nice denim pants or jeans are business casual, this does not mean that anything clothing is appropriate. Save the sweatpants and sportswear for the gym and the couch. As with professional dress, choose outfits that are conservative outfits that are not distracting (Ball, 2007).

Men

While men are allowed more options for business casual attire, it is important to know the boundaries. The following sections define business casual for men in a professional environment.

Ties

Although business casual is more relaxed than professional attire, it is still advisable for a man to wear a tie without a suit jacket or sport coat (Virginia, 2011a). It never hurts to slightly overdress and adds a professional touch (Virginia, 2011a). If a tie is not worn, then a sport coat should be (Virginia, 2011a). Men do not need to wear a matched suit jacket and pants for business casual.

Pants

Men can wear nice dress slacks, khaki, or corduroy slacks (Ball, 2007). Suit pants should only be worn with the suit jacket to prevent excess wear on the pants. Before wearing a nice, hole-free pair of jeans for business casual, ask the event correspondent if dress jeans are appropriate.

Shirts

Men can wear “button-down shirts in stripes, checks, plaids, and denim, polo-style shirts, sweaters, turtlenecks, and vests” (Ball, 2007, 11). Men should wear long-sleeved shirts because they look dressier and are appropriate for any season (Virginia, 2011a). As with professional attire choices, select shirts that are solid white or light blue or have subtle stripes (Ball, 2007). Polo shirts should only be worn if the event is casual, outdoors, or in a very hot location (Virginia, 2011a). Also, all shirts should be tucked-in.

Belts, Socks, and Shoes

Men should always wear belts to maintain a polished appearance (Ball, 2007). Men should also wear leather shoes and a leather belt (Virginia, 2011a). Men have the option of wearing leather loafers and nice leather slip on dress shoes for business casual attire. Wear dark socks that reach mid-calf so that no skin is showing when sitting down (Virginia, 2011a). The belt, shoes, and socks should coordinate with each other for a polished appearance (Virginia, 2011a).

Jewelry

As for any professional event, wear a conservative watch (Virginia, 2011a). This way, a person will not have to constantly pull a cell phone out to check the time, which could look like he or she is texting or making other phone calls (Virginia, 2011a). Also, be discreet when checking a watch for the time to prevent looking bored (Virginia, 2011a). Avoid wearing earrings unless it is common knowledge that men's earring are acceptable in the company or industry (Virginia, 2011a). Even if earrings acceptable in the industry, it may not be for the company's event, so leave the earrings and other questionable jewelry at home.

Hair

The same guidelines for professional Hair apply to business casual. This information can be found under "Hair" in the Men's Professional/Interview Attire section.

Example of Business Casual for Men

Figure 20 below is an example of appropriate business casual attire (North, 2011a).



Figure 20 Business Casual for Men

The website offers comments on the outfit from different colleges within the university as to whether it is appropriate for career fairs and interviews. Many of the comments say that for interviews and professional career fairs, a suit jacket should be worn (North, 2011a). In general, this type of outfit is a good example of business casual, although a tie is optional when wearing a sport coat and colors can be substituted.

Women

Women's professional attire already offers many clothing choices. When it comes to business casual attire, the possibilities seem endless. The following sections provide guidelines for selecting a business casual wardrobe.

Pants/Skirts

Instead of matched suits, suit separates are the best option for business casual (Ball, 2007). The style and pattern of slacks or a skirt is a matter of choice, as long as they fit appropriately and the hem of the skirt does not reach higher than just above the knee (Ball, 2007). Women can choose many pant styles from khaki slacks to wool-blend slacks for a dressier look and many styles in between (Ball, 2007). Appropriate patterns for matched suits are also appropriate for business casual slacks: "solids, pin-stripes, houndstooth, tweeds, or glen plaid" (Ball, 2007, 11). Nice denim jeans may be appropriate, but ask the event correspondent or other attendees before wearing denim as business casual. If denim pants are not appropriate, women may have the option to wear a denim skirt, dress, vest, or shirt (Ball, 2007). When it comes to business casual denim, darker denims look more professional (Ball, 2007). If it could be worn it to a club or social party, do not wear it to a professional event (Virginia, 2011a).

Shirts

Long-sleeved blouses are appropriate for any season (Virginia, 2011a). Tailored knit sweaters or sweater sets are also appropriate for business casual (Virginia, 2011a). "Cotton, silk, and blends are appropriate" (Virginia, 2011a, paragraph 21). Never wear velvets, shimmery fabrics, or tight-fitting shirts (Virginia, 2011a). Again, if it could be worn to a club or social party, then do not wear it to a professional event.

Jewelry and Accessories

Accessories should be simple, such as a scarf (Virginia, 2011a). Wear one ring on each hand and avoid flashy, noisy, and distracting colors and styles of scarves and jewelry (Virginia, 2011a). The same guidelines for professional attire apply for business casual. Creative industries like fashion design may allow more creativity in choices. However, it is best to stay on the conservative side (Virginia, 2011a). Do not risk making a negative first impression.

Makeup, Hair, and Nails

The same professional guidelines for makeup, hair, and nails apply to business casual. This information can be found in the Women's Professional Attire Sections, *Makeup*, *Hair*, and *Nails*.

Shoes

Besides leather pumps, women can wear loafers or oxfords in the business casual setting (Ball, 2007). Variations on these two styles are in Figures 21 and 22 below.



Figure 21 Black Suede Oxfords



Figure 22 Black Patent Leather Loafer

As with professional attire shoes, business casual shoes should be leather or microfiber and be closed-toe shoes (Virginia, 2011a). Black is always a professional color, but brown, navy, tan, and taupe can be worn (Virginia, 2011a). Pastel-colored and white shoes are not appropriate even for business casual (Virginia, 2011a). Again, if they could be worn to a party or club, do not wear them for professional events.

Hosiery

Socks and pantyhose do not have to be worn with business casual (Virginia, 2011a). Pantyhose should still be worn with knee-length skirts and dresses (Virginia, 2011a). Always dress appropriately for the weather (Virginia, 2011a). If uncertain, ask a professional in the industry.

Examples of Business Casual for Women

North Dakota State University's Career Center website offers comments on outfits from different businesses related to the University's major colleges. For the women's examples, jeans are not acceptable (North, 2011b). A suit with a jacket and blouse is professional attire for interviews and regular work days (North, 2011b). Figure 23 on the following page is an example of appropriate business casual attire (North, 2011b). Although this is a decent example of business casual, women have many options for pants, skirts, and dresses and colors can be substituted.



Figure 23 Business Casual for Women

When to Wear Business Casual Attire

It can be difficult to decide whether business casual or professional attire is appropriate. First, look at the fliers or invitations to the event to see if specific attire is mandatory. If attire is not mentioned, it is always appropriate to politely ask the event host/sponsor.

Career Fairs

Career Fairs will generally specify on their website or fliers whether business casual is appropriate or professional attire. For example, Ball State advertises to wear professional attire for their University sponsored Career Fairs (Ball, 2007). When looking for a job, dress for an interview, even without a personal interview scheduled that day (Virginia, 2011b).

Employer Information Sessions

Business casual is more appropriate for employer information sessions, unless otherwise stated (Virginia, 2011a). When interviewing, employers will come to campus the day before initial interviews and hold sessions in campus classrooms or lecture halls (Virginia, 2011a). When these presentations are to a large group of students, attendees are generally not required to be as strict in apparel because it is a reception type event (Virginia, 2011a). However, if the event is more exclusive or formal, attendees should probably wear professional attire (Virginia, 2011a). Dress will “depend on the industry and the type of employer hosting the event” (Virginia, 2011a, paragraph 2). If in doubt, ask the employer before attending. Make a good first impression by being prepared with questions and a resume for the session.

Business Casual Attire Conclusion

Professionals should not wear business casual attire in a professional environment unless instructed to do so. Business casual is appropriate for some employer information sessions, career fairs, and sometimes the workplace. Employers will let employees know what type of dress is expected. When dressing for business casual, it never hurts to overdress. However, underdressing will create a bad impression. Know the difference between business casual and casual.

Casual Attire

Casual attire is not appropriate for any business situation or interviews unless otherwise specified by the event host (North, 2011a; North 2011b). Casual attire refers to “blue jeans, T-shirts, sports or athletic gear, punk clothing, hip hop clothing, manual labor clothing, swimwear clothing, casual skirts or sarongs, and sleeveless shirts” (Brown, 2009, 105). This attire generally presents a sloppy appearance and should not be worn to interviews or other business events (North, 2011a; North 2011b). Figure 24 and 25 below are examples of casual attire.



Figure 24 Men's Casual Dress



Figure 25 Women's Casual Dress

While these outfits do not look inappropriate for everyday activities, employer comments suggested they should not be worn to professional events, career fairs, or to work (North, 2011a; North 2011b).

Casual Attire Conclusion

Professionals need to project a credible image in interviews, presentations, and business operations for their employers. Casual dress is generally not appropriate for the professional environment and should be reserved for purely social events with friends and family. Policies will vary between companies and industries, so the best practice is to research the dress code of and employer.

.Professional Dinners

It is important to know dining etiquette to make a good impression on coworkers, bosses, and potential employers or clients. Table manners are important even outside of the professional realm. The following sections provide guidelines and tips for professional dinners.

Before the Meal

The first rule of a professional event or dinner is to be on time (Meldrum, 2007). Notify the host as soon as possible when arriving late (Meldrum, 2007). Showing up ten minutes early is also a good practice and will give attendees extra time to greet other members of the dinner (Meldrum, 2007). Before entering the room where the dinner is held, turn off cell phones and pagers.

When enter the dinner, greetings should be given with a smile and a handshake (Meldrum, 2007). Introduce guests when greeting attendees (Meldrum, 2007). The article also says “establish who will pay for the meal when dinner arrangements are made to avoid confusion when the bill comes. Unless specified, the host will be assumed to pay” (Meldrum, 2007, 12). When hosting and paying for a large dinner party at upscale restaurants, offer the server a credit card before beginning the meal so the restaurant knows who is paying the bill.

Ordering

If another person is buying the meal, it is not polite to order the most expensive item on the menu or more than two courses unless the host instructed otherwise (Meldrum, 2007). If no restrictions have been stated, ask what the host would recommend (Meldrum, 2007). The response should give a clue as to what food is acceptable to order (Meldrum, 2007). If no recommendations are given, choose a moderately priced food that is familiar and easy to eat during conversation (Meldrum, 2007). For questionable menu items, ask the server before ordering that item (Meldrum, 2007). This prevents a person from ordering food he or she is allergic to or does not like (Meldrum, 2007).

Hosts will generally insist guests order be taken before his or her order (Meldrum, 2007). The server might even choose how to take orders, generally taking women’s orders before men’s (Meldrum, 2007). Do not order alcohol at a business event (Meldrum, 2007). Wine may be served, but do not order it unless instructed it is acceptable. When consuming wine, do not drink enough to impair judgment (Meldrum, 2007). It is a professional event and individuals should not risk ruining their image or their company’s reputation.

The Meal

Wait until everyone has been served his or her meal before eating (Meldrum, 2007). When eating, the napkin should be place on the lap to catch dropped food and to be easily accessible to wipe the mouth (Meldrum, 2007). Always pass dishes to the left around the table (Meldrum, 2007). Butter should be placed upon the plate, not directly on the bread from the

butter dish (Meldrum, 2007). Tear off bite-size pieces of bread and butter them one piece at a time (Meldrum, 2007). This will help prevent messes from butter and crumbs on clothing. If soup is ordered, stir it to cool it off instead of blowing on it (Meldrum, 2007). This reduces the risk of guests blowing hot soup on the table or other guests. Take small bites and do not chew with the mouth open to prevent choking (Meldrum, 2007). While eating, guests should pace themselves so the group finishes each course together (Meldrum, 2007). When finished, place the napkin neatly on the table in the space reserved for the napkin (Meldrum, 2007). The following section lists basic table manners.

Basic Table Manners

Some table manners are obvious while others are not. The following guidelines will help maintain a professional appearance throughout the dinner.

- Do not ask for a doggy bag as a guest. This is more appropriate in informal dining situations.
- Order foods that can be eaten with a knife and fork. Finger foods are messy and more appropriate for informal dining.
- Do not order alcohol.
- Do not smoke at the event or at the dinner table.
- The simple place setting rule is solids to the left, liquids to the right.
- Do not slouch at the table.
- Elbows should only be on the table between courses, not while eating.
- Don't season food before tasting it.
- Do not chew with mouth open or eat noisily.
- Do not talk with a mouth full of food.
- Do not slurp soup or drinks.
- Do not blow on soup.
- Leave the room to remove food from teeth.
- Do not leave the table unless it is an emergency such as feeling sick or having to use the bathroom.
- Do not reach over people. Ask for them to pass things out of reach.
- Pass the salt and pepper together because they are a set.
- When passing, offer to the person on the left before passing to the right.
- If a utensil falls on the floor, pick it up if it is within reach and ask the server for a clean one.
- Let left-handed people sit at the left end or head of the table so that everyone has adequate elbow room.
- If food falls off the plate, pick it up with silverware and put it on the edge of the plate.
- Notify the server for large spills.
- Do not spit a piece of bad food in the napkin. Remove it with the utensil and place it on the edge of the plate. Cover it with another piece of food if possible.
- Fold empty sugar packets and tuck it under the edge of the cup's saucer.

- Hands should be cupped around a lemon before squeezing to control the spray. Place leftover in drink or on saucer.
- Tear off pieces of bread and rolls and butter the pieces.

(Ball, 2007)

All of these guidelines may not apply to a specific professional dinner, but they are an adequate basis for manners. The next section describes napkin use and placement in more detail.

Napkins

The dinner host begins the meal by unfolding his or her napkin (Ball, 2007). Place the napkin over the lap once everyone has been seated at the table (Ball, 2007). If it is a small luncheon napkin, it is appropriate to place it completely unfolded (Ball, 2007). If it is a larger dinner napkin, fold it in half, lengthwise (Ball, 2007). It should remain on the lap until needed to blot the mouth. When leaving the table during the meal, place the napkin on the seat or to the left of the place setting (Ball, 2007). Just as the host began the meal by unfolding the napkin, the host will end the meal by placing his or her napkin on the table (Ball, 2007). When everyone has finished, lay the napkin neatly (refolding is unnecessary) to the right of the dinner plate (Ball, 2007). For most dinners, neat placement means the napkin is neither crumpled into a ball nor folded perfectly. Different guides suggest different napkin placement. Linda Stradley's *Dining Etiquette Guide* on What's Cooking America's website says to place the napkin on the left when finished (Stradley, 2011). The "Business Etiquette" article also says to place the napkin on the left side when finished eating (Meldrum, 2007, 12). The best advice for napkin placement would be to mimic the host. These guidelines are useful because they allow for easy access to the napkin when needed and also signal the start and end of the meal. The next section describes utensil use and eating styles.

Utensils

Sometimes formal dinner settings can be daunting and confusing when sitting down at the dinner table. Most settings are set up so that guests use the utensils on the outside first and work their way in through the courses (Meldrum, 2007). Generally one utensil is used for each course (Meldrum, 2007). Figure 26 on the following page shows a formal place setting (Meldrum, 2007). A formal place setting includes a bread plate (shown as 1. in the diagram) to the upper left of the dinner plate (5., also known as the service plate), which is always in the center of the place setting. The water glass (10.) is the larger of the two drink glasses placed to the upper right of the dinner plate. The wine glass (9.) is placed diagonally to the right just below the water glass. The salad fork (3.) is placed directly to the left of the dinner fork (4.) on the left side of the service plate. The dessert fork (11) is usually placed at the top of the service plate with the tines pointing left. The soup spoon (8.) is placed directly to the right of the teaspoon (7.), which is placed directly to the right of the table knife (6.) on the right side of the service plate. The napkin (2.) is placed to the left of the forks on the left side of the place setting (Meldrum, 2007). Therefore, the napkin and bread plate to the left of the setting belong to that guest along with the glasses on the right. Some place settings will vary, but the main rule to

follow is using the utensils on the outside and work in through the courses, using one utensil for each course. The descriptions are also given under the diagram.

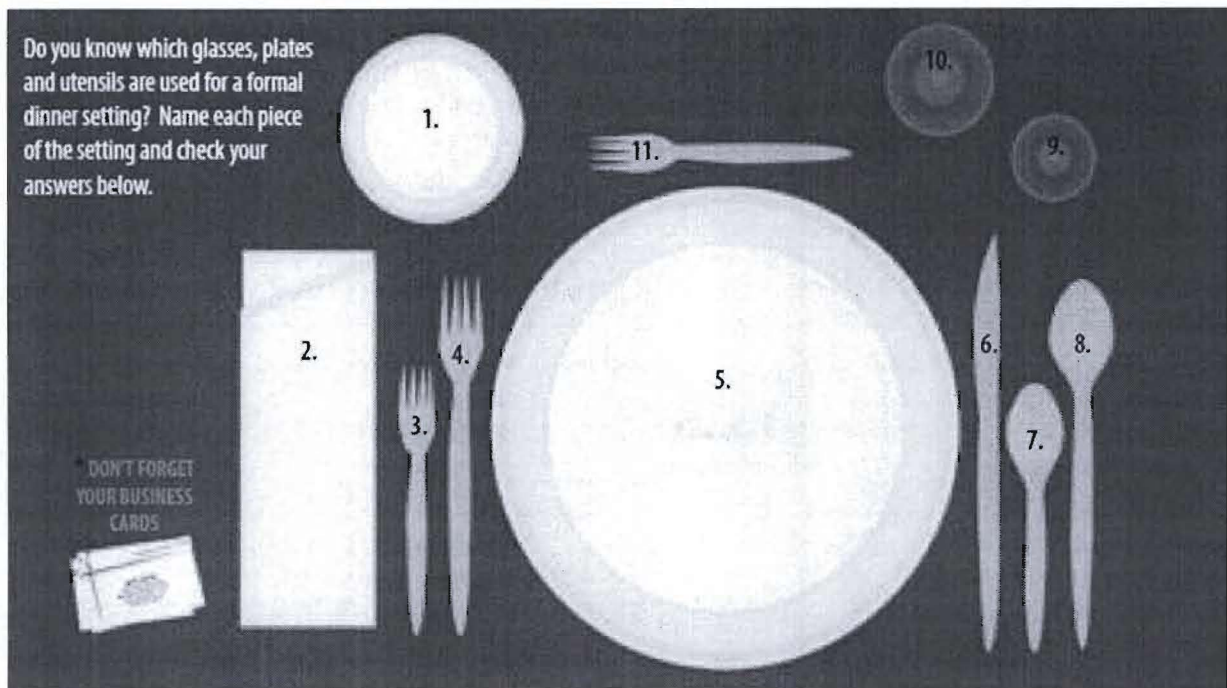


Figure 26 Formal Place Setting

(Meldrum, 2007, 12)

1. Bread plate
2. Napkin
3. Salad fork
4. Dinner fork
5. Service plate
6. Table knife
7. Teaspoon
8. Soup spoon
9. Wine glass
10. Water glass
11. Dessert fork

Using the Knife and Fork

Two styles exist for using a knife and fork while dining (Ball, 2007). One is referred to as the American Style and the other is the European or Continental Style (Ball, 2007). Either style is appropriate (Ball, 2007). Follow the lead of the host. The following two sections describe each utensil style.

American Style

When cutting food, hold the fork in the left hand and hold the food to the plate with it while cutting the food with the knife in the right hand (Ball, 2007). Once cutting a few bite-size pieces of food, lay the knife on the top edge of the plate with the sharp edge facing towards the

food. Transfer the fork from the left hand to right to eat with the tines facing upward (Ball, 2007). For left-handed people, leave the fork in the left hand to eat, still with the tines facing upward (Ball, 2007). Then will spear or scoop food and bring it to the mouth with the tines still facing upward (Ball, 2007).

If a guest needs to pause while eating, or leave the table, he or she should place the knife and fork in the resting position. Place the knife across the top of the plate with the blade facing in and the fork diagonally with the tines up (Ball, 2007). When finished eating, the common resting position for the knife and fork is to lay the knife and fork side by side with the sharp side facing toward the chair and the tines down over the dinner plate (Ball, 2007). They should be laid either horizontally or diagonally on the plate (Ball, 2007). If the plate were a clock, the utensils would point to the 9 and 3 in the horizontal position and the 10 and 4 in the diagonal position (Ball, 2007). This will tell the server that guests are finished eating, but servers will probably ask to make sure guests are finished.

European or Continental Style

One difference between American and European style is that the fork and knife do not switch hands regardless of hand preference. In the European style, cut food with the fork in the left holding the food in place and the knife in the right (Ball, 2007). Use the left hand to bring the piece of food to the mouth, tines facing down (Ball, 2007). This style can be more difficult to execute when eating foods like mashed potatoes and rice. Spear pieces that can be speared and use the knife to push other pieces onto the back of the fork (Ball, 2007). Obviously, this style will take practice to master.

If guests need to pause while eating, or leave the table, place the knife and fork in the European resting position. Place the knife diagonally across the plate, handle to the right and blade facing in (Ball, 2007). The fork should also be placed diagonally with the handle to the right and tines down, either on the knife or plate (Ball, 2007). When finished, the same rules apply as for American style. Lay the knife and fork side by side with the sharp side facing toward the chair and the tines down over the dinner plate (Ball, 2007). The difference is that the pair should be placed vertically as if they are pointing to the 12 and 6 (Ball, 2007). Do not place a used piece of silverware back on the table or leave it in a cup. Usually there will be saucers on which to place the used utensils (Ball, 2007). If the soup plate does not have a service plate, then it is acceptable to leave the spoon in the soup plate (Ball, 2007). Any unused silverware is left on the table (Ball, 2007). The server will clear the dishes as each course is finished.

Business Cards

As the place setting diagram showed, it is always appropriate to give and take business cards at a professional dinner to remember the other guests and follow-up with questions or comments for them (Ball, 2007). Jot a few notes about the person or conversation on the back as a reminder. College students may not have a professional business card, but it would not hurt to have some made with contact information and possibly some information about skills or academic majors.

After the Meal

Upscale restaurants generally expect guests to pay a 20% tip in addition to what is owed. A 20% tip should also be made if the guests have received outstanding service (Meldrum, 2007). Some restaurants add a gratuity to bills that have large parties, generally 8 or more. If dining at an upscale restaurant, add the difference between 20% and the tip automatically added for large parties. For example, if charged 18% gratuity, then add 2% to make the tip a 20% gratuity. If a 20% gratuity is already added to the bill, then that is the tip guests are required to leave. Do not try to show off by leaving an outrageous tip. If an individual wants to leave a generous tip, they should do it discreetly. Once the bill is paid, thank the host and dinner party before leaving (Meldrum, 2007).

Professional Dinners Conclusion

When dining with other professionals, it is important to remember manners. Professionals can polish their confident and credible image with knowledge of dining etiquette guidelines. Many of the guidelines stem from common courtesy acts, such as waiting for everyone to be served before eating. Eating styles can also come in handy for professionals that travel globally to negotiate deals over dinner. The dining guidelines demonstrate good practice for any situation, whether formal or informal. Implementing these practices into daily life will give professionals practice before faced with a professional dinner.

Working the Room at Events

The author of *How to Work a Room* highlights that ninety percent of people do not feel comfortable attending events with strangers (Ball, 2007). This section focuses on how to meet and greet new people at these types of events.

Preparing for the Event

Knowing how to handle social situations can make guests feel more confident and will also help them to make a favorable first impression (Ball, 2007). Do not wait to be properly introduced. Plan an introduction to include name, occupation, and information that establishes a connection to other guests (Ball, 2007). Other important rules are to enter the situation with a positive attitude, practice small talk about light topics, and develop a host mentality: start conversations and introduce acquaintances if needed (Ball, 2007). The overlying theme for getting ready is confidence (Ball, 2007). Know why the event is beneficial and how networking with these people can help a career or social situation.

Approaching Strangers

When approaching strangers, relax and take a deep breath. This will help individuals to relax so they can seem confident and composed (Ball, 2007). A fairly accurate first impression is made in the first fifteen seconds of conversation, possibly even less time (Ball, 2007). First impressions are remembered, especially if they are bad first impressions. After introductions, read the nametags of the group or ask for names if nametags are not present. Information on nametags such as occupation might incite questions or conversations (Ball, 2007). For example, ask a question related to the person's job, especially if it is an interesting occupation. Guide the conversation with questions and be sure to make positive statements about surroundings the surroundings and venue (Ball, 2007). Such a comment is a safe small talk topic and shows interest to other guests.

Keep the Conversation Going

To be a great conversationalist, ask several questions and wait politely to speak (Ball, 2007). The daily newspaper is a great conversation topic source for event conversations (Ball, 2007). Even if current events or sports are not interesting to an individual, other guests may be interested in the topics. Knowing even a small piece of information about these topics will establish a common knowledge. The other people in the conversation will feel more comfortable talking to individuals that have a common connection to them (Ball, 2007). Another way to keep the conversation going is to talk about new developments in the professions of the group (Ball, 2007). In larger groups of people, it will be easier to keep the conversation going. However, it might be harder to find a time to speak. Be patient and polite. If the conversation goes in a different direction, ask for business cards or an e-mail address to explore a topic further with a particular person in the group at a later time.

When to Move On

Be observant of the body language of those in the conversation. When others begin to look tired, the group begins to dwindle, or members of the group get bored, make a graceful exit (Ball, 2007). Thank the group or person for the conversation and then leave (Ball, 2007). If it is difficult to get away from the conversation, make an excuse to leave such as getting a drink or using the bathroom (Ball, 2007). It is also acceptable to introduce another person to the group and then leave (Ball, 2007). Generally individuals should be able to leave a conversation without having to bring someone else into the conversation or needing an excuse.

Leaving the Event

Before leaving, thank the host (Ball, 2007). Seek them out and shake hands, saying goodbye (Ball, 2007). Avoid an overdrawn goodbye and be professional and gracious in leaving (Ball, 2007). The key is to leave confident and composed.

Working the Room Conclusion

Attending an event can be nerve-wracking. Therefore, it is important to have a positive mental attitude throughout the event. Even while facing boredom, things might become more interesting as the event progresses. Be patient and polite in conversation and know how to leave graciously.

For more information on interacting in person, see the Face-to-Face section under Communication Media beginning on page 29.

Communication

Communication can be facilitated by various types of media and technology. Communication is “the process of sending and receiving messages—sometimes through spoken or written words and sometimes through such nonverbal means as facial expressions, gestures, and voice qualities” (Ober, 2006, 5). In order for communication to take place, the receiver has to be able to understand the message. The message should be in a language that the receiver or audience understands and any specialized language within the message should be defined (Ober, 2006).

Once a message has been carefully composed, the sender needs to choose the appropriate channel for delivering the message. While technology, has made it faster and more convenient to send a message, it has also made people lazy by allowing them to shorten words in texts, which then carries over into e-mails and social networking sites. These abbreviations have even become a part of our English language.

The most important thing to remember is that no matter how communication is achieved with family and friends, all communication should be constructed and executed intelligently in a professional environment. Professionals should be knowledgeable, use punctuation and proper grammar, and show meaning that is carefully constructed to avoid offending the recipient. “The goal of communication is to send and receive messages that are positive and productive (Yasko-Magnum, 2007, 138). Communicating articulately, pleasantly, and actively listening to feedback will help professionals gain credibility with their audience and can also help them appear confident in communicating the message (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). The following sections describe the basic communication model, listening skills, communication skills, and communication media, such as phone, e-mail, and social networks.

The Basic Communication Model

The basic communication model is fairly simple and obvious. The sender wants to communicate a message, the receiver(s) are meant to hear the message, the medium used to deliver the message, and non-verbal elements (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Figure 27 below exhibits a simple communication model.

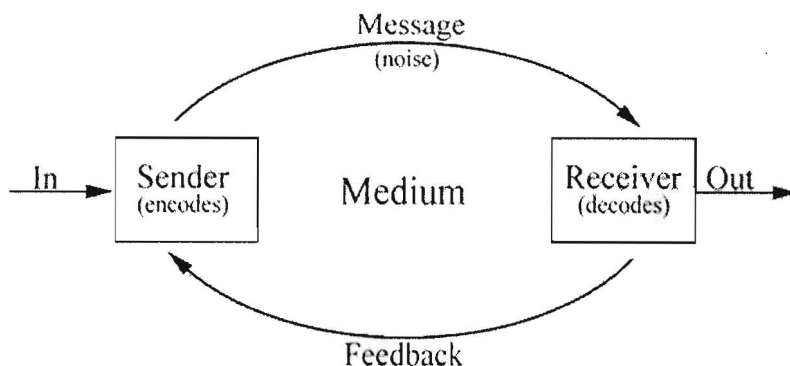


Figure 27 Simple Communication Model

Communication breakdown can occur at any part of the model, but it usually happens in the transmission of the message (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). The recipient(s) can interpret the message differently than the sender intended or the medium of delivery is not effective in delivering the message. For example, the e-mail was damaged during transmission or the speaker did not have a microphone and only the first three rows of the audience could hear him. Sometimes it is the recipient's fault for not listening. The next section describes listening skills.

Listening

The most skilled communicator is the person who generally spends most of the time listening and then responding in an intelligent manner (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Hearing and listening are different concepts. "Hearing is just the reaction to vibrations and sounds," while listening is "a skill that requires understanding a message and active involvement in the communication process" (Yasko-Magnum, 2007, 141-2). Furthermore, active listeners are interested in the message, using their ears, eyes, and body language to give the sender feedback on how well they are communicating (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Passive listening happens when a recipient hears the message, but may be thinking about something else or just hears what he wants to hear (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Passive listening "can reflect incompetence, ignorance, and laziness," (Yasko-Magnum, 2007, 144) and can result in missed opportunities. Competitive listening happens when the recipient intends to challenge the speaker on the message and impose his or her beliefs and experiences about the message to the speaker and/or audience (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Competitive listening should "be completely eliminated from communication" (Yasko-Magnum, 2007, 146). This type of listening usually involves being self-centered and interrupting others, which is "rude and selfish behavior that can hurt business relationships," (Yasko-Magnum, 2007, 147) as well as personal relationships. The goal in listening is to be an active listener despite the other noise going in the environment (room temperature, pending deadlines, distracting people, etc.).

Sending a Message

There are several factors to consider when sending a message. Decide the tone of the message, consider the audience for the message, and which media will be used to deliver the message to the audience. Always use proper English (or the primary language of the audience). For written communications, use proper spelling and punctuation (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). When sending a message in person, body language and eye contact are important (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Avoid actions that show a negative attitude, such as crossing arms, fidgeting, and avoiding eye contact (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Improve the audience's understanding of the message by knowing the subject matter, elaborating on confusing or technical subjects, and answering questions (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). It is easier know if the audience understands the message in person because the communicator can read their body language and facial expressions. The next section covers communication media, in which the sender relies on words to convey the message.

Communication Media

A message can be delivered to an audience in many ways. Electronic media have made it faster and easier to communicate with a large audience, but it is also easier to make typographical errors and harder to ensure the message is interpreted correctly. Some people may also feel that electronic communications, such as e-mail, are impersonal. Other methods of communication, such as social networks, can be too personal. What individuals post on these websites can offend their family and friends as well as potential employers. The following sections will explore communication methods in detail.

Face-to-Face Communication

Face-to-face communication is “the most effective form of communication in business” (Yasko-Magnum, 2007, 164). This type of communication is the richest because professionals can use body language and intonation when delivering the message. Communicators can also physically see if the audience understands the message they are trying to convey. Use this method to show sincerity when communicating an apology or a sincere concern (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). If a mistake has been made, it is best to apologize in person (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). While this method provides the richest information, it is important to consider how to deliver the message, especially if it is bad news. If an error has been found, do not degrade the person responsible for the error, even when it is his or her fault (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Instead, alert the person of the error without saying “you” because it indicates blame, and if appropriate, suggest a solution to fix the error. Any criticisms in business communication should be constructive (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Constructive criticisms are more effective in solving problems than negativity (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). It is important to read the audience to understand emotional reactions to the message, which can ensure the best communication during a face-to-face interaction.

Body Language

Because the audience can physically see and hear the message in face-to-face interactions, it is important to remember that body language can convey a message, too. If a speaker works hard on a presentation, but his or her body language reflects a lack of confidence, the presenter will not sell the message to the audience (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Furthermore, “behavior affects [the] entire self-image” (Yasko-Magnum, 2007, 177). Communicators should exude confidence through words and body language without seeming too confident or timid (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Body language can help in establishing credibility with the audience. The five elements of body language that help establish credibility are eye contact, posture, poise, expression, and behavior.

Eye Contact

One form of body language is eye contact. Maintain eye contact during the entire monologue or dialogue to show confidence, belief in the materials, credibility, and interest in the audience (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Most of all, eye contact helps sell the message (Yasko-

Magnum, 2007). When giving a presentation to a large audience, make eye contact with several people in the audience. Do not choose just one person and stare at them as it may make them uncomfortable and prevent them from hearing the message.

Posture

Another form of body language is posture. Good posture not only reflects confidence but is healthy for bones, too (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). When carrying on conversations or presenting, “sit or stand straight with shoulders down and head up” and correct the posture when sitting or standing for long periods of time (Yasko-Magnum, 2007, 180). Slouching can convey a defeated, nervous, or low self-esteem individual (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). People with disabilities that prevent them from good posture can find other ways to exude confidence (Yasko-Magnum, 2007).

Poise

Poise is related to posture in how a person adjusts his or her body. Sitting with poise involves crossing legs or keeping them together, leaning slightly forward to show interest, keeping the chin up and head straight (or slightly tilted), and keeping elbows off the table (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). To stand with poise, avoid crossing arms or putting them on hips, and stand up straight (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Slouching can contradict a confident message or convey laziness and noninterest (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Therefore, it is important to show confidence and interest when giving a message to an audience. When part of the audience, it is respectful to show the speaker interest (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Some habits to avoid when presenting a message to an audience are cracking knuckles, fidgeting, moving arms a lot, chewing gum, or any other annoying mannerisms (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). These habits will distract the audience and should be avoided unless they cannot be controlled.

Expression

Expression is another important aspect of body language. Smile unless the situation or topic is very serious (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Try to show expression and interest through facial expressions and avoid a monotonous tone (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Avoid being overly expressive to prevent the impression of trying too hard. The face should convey confidence when delivering a message (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). If a speaker looks confused as he or she is stating a fact, the audience will not have much confidence that the person knows the validity of the fact (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Also, if presenters cannot answer questions from the audience, they should admit they don’t know the answer and offer to research the question after the meeting or presentation. If the offer is accepted, presenters should collect business cards or contact information to follow up with the answer.

Behavior

Behavior is the fifth element of body language and is another way to establish credibility with an audience (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Behavior includes traits like punctuality, work ethic,

and management style. For example, show up on time for events and meetings. Work hard to understand the topic if possible, and treat others with respect to earn respect (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Most people do not like to feel degraded or hear a bunch of excuses.

Telephone Communication

When speaking on the phone, enunciate words to ensure the person on the other end clearly understands (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Phones should be answered in a professional manner. Actively listen to the person on the other end. When taking messages for someone else, write down the name, message, date, and time the call was taken (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). If the person on the end of the conversation cannot be understood, ask for a repeat of the message to ensure that it was understood properly (Yasko-Magnum, 2007).

Letter/Computer Generated Letter Communication

In today's professional world, letters are generally written with word processing applications on computers. Hand written letters may add a personal touch, but usually computer-generated letters are sufficient for most professional situations. Hand-written notes of thanks and congratulations can help make professionals more successful in dealing with clients and coworkers (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Hand-written letters are generally appropriate for letters to friends and family and thank you letters (Letter, 2011). Professionals should type letters if they cannot write legibly, but remember proper etiquette says to handwrite these types of letters (Letter, 2011).

Computer word-processing applications automatically check grammar and spelling. It is also easier and more efficient to use word processing applications when sending form letters to multiple recipients. However, the software does not always catch every mistake, so proofread the document before sending it. "Computer-written letters should transmit [the] message with intelligence, accuracy, and attention to detail," and professionals are responsible for what they write (Yasko-Magnum, 2007, 168). Formal letters written on behalf of businesses or sent to professional contacts should be typewritten (Letter, 2011). They should also use proper grammar and spelling (Letter, 2011). Professional letters should be typed to be legible and give the recipient a positive impression of the message (Letter, 2011). Other letters that should be typed are cover letters and any business communication letter (Letter, 2011). If the letter has a polished, professional appearance, the sender will seem to be polished and professional as well.

E-mail

E-mail is a fast and easy way to communicate. However, since it is so convenient, people often forget the need to use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. In e-mails to educators, clients, or colleagues, it is important to make sure the message is spelled and punctuated correctly to ensure the receiver interprets the message as intended (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). The following sentences are a popular example of how commas can change the meaning of a sentence.

An English professor wrote the following sentences on the black board and asked his students to punctuate the sentence. "A woman without her man is nothing." According to the story, the males wrote, "A woman, without her man, is nothing." The females in the class wrote, "A woman: without her, man is nothing."

(CiteHR.com, 2011)

This is a good example of how messages can be misconstrued and potentially offend the receiver of a message. Be very careful before hitting the "Send" button and make sure that everything is punctuated and spelled properly. Once an e-mail is sent, it cannot be unsent.

Another piece of important advice regarding e-mail is to set up a professional e-mail account when looking for jobs in college or in the business world. For example, the following e-mail addresses do not convey a professional image of the owner: cutiepie7@yahoo.com, ladiesman69@hotmail.com, or starwarsrocks@gmail.com. Use an address that includes a name so those sending messages can learn names when typing them out (TheJobBored, 2008). "Any 21st century professional needs to maintain a professional sounding e-mail address, *separate from* their work e-mail address *and* separate from their personal e-mail address" (TheJobBored, 2008, paragraph 8). The separate address will be useful for searching new jobs while already employed (TheJobBored, 2008). Depending on security software, the current employer could read the e-mails sent and received on the work e-mail, and they will not want to see that their employee is looking for another job without informing them.

It is easy and generally free to create an account on many e-mail service providers (TheJobBored, 2008). Gmail is one of these providers and can give contacts the sense that a professional is more up-to-date with technology than a professional with a Netscape or EarthLink e-mail address (TheJobBored, 2008). Yahoo and Hotmail are also popular free e-mail service providers. E-mail providers make it easy to forward messages sent to the professional e-mail address to the most used address (TheJobBored, 2008). Usually users just have to configure settings by providing the other e-mail address and clicking a few buttons. However, users should reply to messages from the original e-mail address the sender chose (TheJobBored, 2008). Overall, it is best that a professional e-mail address includes a professional's name, not hobbies or cute pet names. It should reflect who an individual is professionally, not personally or physically.

Instant Messaging and Text Messaging

Both instant messaging and text messaging as casual forms of communication and can be used with coworkers, friends, and family (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Both are convenient because users can send short messages quickly instead of calling or writing an e-mail for a trivial matter. Texts may also get faster responses than e-mail if the recipient does not work at a desk all day. If clients text, then it may be acceptable to text them back, but avoid using slang and emoticons (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Although professionals use a casual form of communication with instant messaging and text messaging, they still need to maintain the same professionalism they would in other forms of communication at work (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). The content of the messages should remain professional.

Blogs and E-mail Newsletters

Blogs and e-mail newsletters are a great way to give clients and potential hires a glimpse into a company (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). They can be used to share business strength and operations and also opinions and stories (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). When creating these, follow proper grammar and spelling rules (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Well written content will entice readers and make them interested in the organization (Yasko-Magnum, 2007). Do not make an employer look bad through any formal or informal communication.

Websites

Websites are another form of electronic communication. They are useful for companies to advertise and inform the public of products and practices over the Internet. Computer-savvy professionals can create personal professional websites including resumes and contact information. These websites may also be useful for job searches and professional networking. Google offers basic website creation tools for free from the homepage to assist users in creating a website. Many other companies offer free website services to users, providing a customizable template and areas to write information. A new type of website, called a social networking website, offer these services as well. However, users need to exercise caution on which sites to use professionally and socially.

Social Networks

Social networking websites can be great tools for enhancing a professional network, as long as the user knows how to use different sites properly. It is important to know which sites are most effective for finding jobs and which are more effective for social communication. It is also important to note that information posted on purely social websites can be seen by employers and can result in punishment or termination.

Users should have a consistent policy for communicating with current and prospective contacts (Lynch, 2009). Depending on the website, a contact might be called a friend, connection, follower, or other variation. In general, social network users should follow six pieces of advice.

First, users must choose a “friending” strategy (Lynch, 2009). Only connect to people that should see the information posted on a personal website. Also, choose people that can refrain from posting inappropriate things that may end up on the personal profile page (Lynch, 2009). If a user has created a professional image on a social site, he or she will have to maintain contacts to uphold the reputation. Other users may perceive the professional user negatively through association if social network connections post unprofessional comments and links.

Second, users should define a conduct policy communicate that policy to potential and existing contacts (Lynch, 2009). Some users choose to friend both strangers and personal contacts while others may only want to connect with people they know personally (Lynch, 2009). If a user prefers work colleagues not see the content posted on a purely social website,

then the user should reject a friend request from the colleague. When rejecting requests, it is polite to explain reasoning for the rejection to real-world contacts (Lynch, 2009). While polite, explanations are not required.

Third, users should respond to personal notes from connections (Lynch, 2009). If a user requesting a connection has written a note along with the request, it is polite to respond with an acceptance note or explanation of rejection (Lynch, 2009). If the request seems to be from someone who just wants to have a lot of friends on the website and did not include a note, then it is okay to just ignore or reject the request (Lynch, 2009). If a connection has sent a message or reply, it is polite to acknowledge the message.

Fourth, if users do not want to connect to a user on a social or professional site, they can offer alternatives (Lynch, 2009). For example, if work colleague asks to be a friend on a social site, but the user has a policy against it, that user should offer to connect with the colleague on a more professional social site like LinkedIn (Lynch, 2009). If users simply do not want to connect to the user, it is acceptable to ignore or reject requests. Be careful not to offend real-world contacts.

Fifth, send explanations to other users when requesting a connection (Lynch, 2009). Provide users explanations when requesting connections. Without an explanation, acquaintances may accidentally reject a user because they do not remember or recognize that user (Lynch, 2009). If the connection is an acquaintance, remind the user of the real-world connection to refresh their memory. If the user is a stranger, tell them why a connection is being requested. If users do not provide a good reason to connect, they should be prepared to have the request rejected or ignored.

Lastly, users should always alert other users before making a connection with an unknown mutual connection (Lynch, 2009). Users may feel awkward when someone they do not know requests a connection (Lynch, 2009). Before recommending two strangers to be friends, ask users for their policy. Once they receive a request and see the mutual connection, they may feel obligated to accept, even if they aren't comfortable doing so (Lynch, 2009). Give notice of the request in a private message let the connection know the user is trustworthy. Then that user will feel more comfortable in adding the person.

This advice makes a lot of sense when considering how these types of interactions would be handled face-to-face. People choose real-life friends based upon personalities and behaviors. Friends should be trustworthy. People want to know their friends before trusting them with sensitive information. If someone is annoying or could hurt a reputation, then individuals can choose to avoid having those types of people for friends. Before a person invites a person to someone else's party, they will ask permission and introduce the friend to others. It is important to note that social etiquette rules that pertain to social situations in real life should carry over into social networking sites. The following sections will describe some popular social networking sites along with etiquette rules to follow to maintain a professional reputation.

Facebook

CrunchBase.com claims that “Facebook is the world’s largest social network, with over 500 million users” (Crunchbase.com, 2011). The creator, Mark Zuckerberg, took the idea of a student picture identification book and put it on a website while studying at Harvard. Through word of mouth, Harvard students began telling others about the website and other universities began to request the service. Facebook was created in February 2004, and by September 2006, anyone with an e-mail address could sign-up for a Facebook account. It has become the sixth most visited site in the United States and is also the top photo sharing website (CrunchBase.com, 2011).

Once a sign-in and password is created, users are sent to a page to enter personal information and edit account settings. After completing the initial setup, users can find and add friends, and if they allow, friends can find them. Facebook allows users to post stories on a “wall,” upload photos, and tag friends in those photos. Once tagged, a notification is sent to that person and they will know to check out the picture. Users can also untag themselves, but cannot remove the photo. The user that originally posted the photo will remove it if they choose to. Users can send friend requests, accept friend requests, reject friend requests, and receive notifications about friends’ activity. Facebook has a “Like” button that users can click to show that they like a post, agree with a comment, or like a picture. Configuration of security settings and add-on application features allow certain friends to see specific information while preventing other friends from seeing the same information. A Facebook profile is fairly configurable, but Facebook limits configuration by providing set templates and options.

Although users seem to have control over their privacy, they should remember that Facebook decides how information is used. The PC Word article, “Experts to Facebook: Mind Your Manners,” (Perez, 2007) highlights a Facebook program called Beacon. This program is an advertising system that “tracks certain actions of Facebook users on some external sites, like Blockbuster and Fandango, in order to report those transactions back to users’ Facebook network” (Perez, 2007). This program was supposed to enhance viral advertising by showing what users’ friends were shopping for, which could then entice them to buy the same products. The activities that could be broadcast were purchases of products, subscribing to services, and adding items to wish lists. Furthermore, research found that Beacon tracked users even when they were not logged into Facebook and had declined the broadcast of their activities. Facebook claimed that it deleted the information from users that have logged-off, deactivated accounts, and nonmembers, but the program was not managed efficiently to ensure member privacy. Although Mark Zuckerberg did apologize for the mismanagement of the program, no indication was made that the program would be deactivated and Facebook would still ultimately decide which data to keep and delete (Perez, 2007). With Facebook, users constantly need to be aware of privacy and security changes, which can be difficult since the company is constantly making changes.

Besides having to be cautious about security changes from the company, users also need to be careful in their use of the social website. The personal profile and friends’ profiles serve a social purpose. The following paragraphs provide tips for using this social networking site, which mimic some of the six general pieces of advice for social networking sites.

First, Facebook users should decide a friend strategy (Null, 2009). Connections on Facebook are called friends. However, these friends may not be friends in real life. Accepting all friend requests will result in managing more chats, applications, and cause invitations (Null, 2009). Users are also more likely to find more inappropriate posts on their profile wall and will be constantly managing their friends list. Users may find it easier to manage their profile if they choose to accept only real-world contacts, but users should still be aware of the postings on their profile.

Secondly, users should limit the number of updates or postings made in a day (Null, 2009). Oversharing daily activities and moods can be frustrating to friends because most people simply do not care as much as the person making the posts (Null, 2009). Carefully consider clever comments or witty banter before leaving it on a profile pages for any user to see. Maintain a professional reputation in all Facebook communication if possible.

A third tip for Facebook users is to limit invitations to take quizzes and play games (Null, 2009). When taking quizzes or playing games, users should refrain from inviting several friends to take the quiz unless they will truly enjoy it (Null, 2009). Usually there is a skip button so users can go directly to the results instead of spamming friends (Null, 2009). Spamming friends is forcing a lot of information on them that they do not want. Do not post everything on the Facebook wall either (Null, 2009). These postings will show up on friends' walls and may result losing friends for oversharing. Several quizzes and links can send messages and posts to all Facebook friends without consent. Sometimes the links even post pornography. If a user is looking for a job and an employer sees that on the user's profile, that person will not likely be getting a job.

Users should also limit Facebook chat (Null, 2009). Just because the chat window shows online friends, they may not be available (Null, 2009). Sending several messages asking where they are will just annoy that friend. They will respond when they are available. If the message is important, call them (Null, 2009). Also, chatting with several users can be impolite. If a user is managing several conversations at once, he may forget to respond to a person or send the wrong message to a user. It is hard to have quality communication when managing several conversations at one time.

The fifth Facebook etiquette guideline is no pokes (Null, 2009). Do not try to start a poke war with a friend. The concept of poking a person seems childish (Null, 2009). Friends will be disappointed when they have a notification and it is just that someone just virtually poked them. Poking can also being annoying when poking someone fifty times, therefore giving them fifty notifications of the same event. Poking can convey an immature message, so reserve it for close friends and family that accept it. Facebook has made the "Poke" button harder to find by placing it in a drop-down menu on the profile page.

The sixth piece of advice is that users should not create groups for a business purpose (Null, 2009). Groups are meant for people with common interests, hobbies, or causes (Null, 2009). Only people with those interests should be invited to join the group (Null, 2009)..

Therefore, creating a group to promote a business and inviting everyone on Facebook to join is not proper etiquette. Create a page for the business instead (Null, 2009). It will be easier to find in searches on Facebook anyways.

The seventh tip is perhaps one of the more important pieces of advice: do not post embarrassing photos (Null, 2009). Since Facebook is one of the top photo-sharing websites, users need to be mindful of photos on Facebook. Through friends, others may be able to see personal photos, which can hurt a user's reputation. At the least, anyone can see a user's profile picture. Users should choose photos wisely and be aware of photos that friends have (Null, 2009). Facebook photos and information can prevent users from getting jobs or even threaten their current job.

In March 2009, Indiana State Trooper Chris Pestow got in trouble for Facebook photos and posts. In Figure 28 below, he has a .357 Magnum pointed at his head by Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) officer Andrew Deddish, drinking what he described as lots of beer with his buddies (Segall, 2009).



Figure 28 Controversial Facebook Photo, (wthr.com 2009)

Pointing a gun at someone is against Indiana state law, despite whether the gun is loaded and in working in order. Besides posting this photo, Trooper Pestow was caught posting lewd and demeaning comments on Facebook while on duty. Once the Indiana State Police realized what he was posting, he was placed on suspension. Two months later, Pestow chose to resign instead of receiving a stiff punishment (Segall, 2009). Deddish received a five-day suspension, carried out his punishment, and continues to work for IMPD (Segall, 2009). This example shows that a social networking website can negatively affect a professional reputation and professional employment

Because users should want to maintain a professional profile, ask for permission before tagging photos (Null, 2009). This etiquette rule is closely related to posting embarrassing pictures. Facebook allows users to tag other users in photos. Some friends might accept that the picture is posted on Facebook, but they may not want to be tagged in it because their entire friend network could see it (Null, 2009). Therefore, it is polite to first ask before tagging a photo.

If a user does not want to be tagged in a photo, then he or she should un-tag the photo (Null, 2009). Users can remove photo tags on photos if it belongs to their account. If a user cannot un-tag the photo directly, he or she should ask the user who posted the photo to remove the tag. If a user does not like the picture, it is acceptable to ask the person to remove it (Null, 2009). The user who posted the pictures ultimately decides if the picture is removed. Therefore, it is important to configure security settings to make personal profiles and photos as private as possible.

The last etiquette tip for Facebook deals with ignoring requests. Ignoring requests are acceptable to a point (Null, 2009). If users receive a lot of friend requests from people they do not know or do not want to add as a Facebook friend, it is okay for them to ignore the request (Null, 2009). However, if the person took the time to write a note along with this request, it is polite to send a note back. Inform users why they are not being added and tell them the personal friending policy (Null, 2009). Users could offer to connect on another social networking site if they want. Be polite when rejecting requests. The person could know personal and professional contacts. Rudeness can hurt a professional reputation.

In order to cast the more professional image on Facebook, follow these etiquette guidelines. Another point that is not directly mentioned is how to interact with other users. Do not post demeaning or rude comments about other users. It is immature. Be kind and courteous to other users, even if they do not reciprocate the courtesy. If users cannot respect a personal code of conduct, de-friend and block them. As seen by the example of State Trooper Chris Pestow, posts on Facebook will affect real-life reputations. Therefore, it is important to maintain a fairly professional profile.

Twitter

Twitter is another popular social networking site. On this site, users can post tweets like posting statuses on Facebook. However, users are limited to 140 characters on a tweet. Like Facebook, Twitter is customizable for users. Users can choose who can “follow” their tweets and whom they choose to follow. Connections to other users are made by following users’ news feeds or if a user allows them to subscribe to their news feed. Just because someone follows a user does not mean that user should reciprocate with a follow. Some people may get upset, but all the user can really do is politely describe his or her reasons.

Like Facebook, Twitter offers the option to always connect to Twitter through a secure Internet connection (<https://www.twitter.com>). This option can be chosen when configuring profile settings. While Twitter provides configuration, not everything will be concealed from the public. Many of the etiquette rules for Facebook are similar to Twitter etiquette rules. The following paragraphs describe ten etiquette guidelines that will help users maintain a professional appearance online while adding value to followers.

When users share or re-share tweets, they should give credit to the source (Lavrusik, 2010). As with any research paper, it is important to give credit to sources. Plagiarism is not just forbidden in academics. Crediting the source also shows followers where the information can be

found so followers can go to the source to learn more (Lavrusik, 2010). Tweets are limited to 140 characters and the best users may not be able to squeeze a large amount of information into a few sentences. It is simply considerate to give credit where it is due.

Some other Twitter etiquette rules are avoid excessive self-promotion and do not pitch inappropriately (Lavrusik, 2010). These rules are similar to others in that posting a lot of narcissistic or promotional tweets can become spam (unwanted information) (Lavrusik, 2010). Pitching applies more to accounts that were created specifically to advertise products or services through replies to users. Beware of companies and individuals that use Twitter incessantly to promote business (Lavrusik, 2010). Followers want to hear insightful thoughts or learn from other users' expertise. Do not force useless information on them. Over promotion and pitching in tweets will drive followers away.

Twitter users should also link a piece of information to the original article when it is cited in a tweet (Lavrusik, 2010). This is a good practice when citing information so followers can click the link to find out more information. If the tweet is original or the information does not have an article to link to, then it is okay to leave the tweet alone (Lavrusik, 2010). This rule is mainly a courtesy to followers to provide the full story for them if they might be interested in learning more information. When linking to a headline, put it in quotes to separate it from an opinion (Lavrusik, 2010). This gives credit to the source and separates the headline from the user's personal opinion. If the user is not giving an opinion, he or she should still put the headline in quotes (Lavrusik, 2010). Adding an opinion can help followers decide if they want to read the article.

Other rules are respond to followers' comments and use the proper response type (Lavrusik, 2010). If a user has a lot of followers and cannot reply to everyone, he or she should reply to address a majority of the questions or comments. Users will be better connected to followers and responses can ensure that followers are not being spammed (Lavrusik, 2010). Users should also know when to reply publicly or direct message when responding to followers (Lavrusik, 2010). Personal information should not be shared through public reply on Twitter. Instead, send a direct message to the other user or get an e-mail address. "@" replies are meant for public replies targeted directly at a particular follower (Null, 2009). Be considerate of the other user's preferences. If they would not want the information to be shared publicly, send a direct message or e-mail. If a user cannot direct message someone because he or she doesn't follow that user, then the user should try to find another way to message them or don't message them at all (Lavrusik, 2010).

Twitter users should follow people that add value (Lavrusik, 2010). Do not follow people in the hopes that they will return the favor to seem popular. As a user follows more users, the home page will fill up with more information, which can make it hard to filter relevant or useful information (Lavrusik, 2010). The large amount of information can also become spam when adding other users for no particular reason. Twitter is centered around people with common interests, whereas Facebook is for friends. Do not add followers unless they will add value to posts and Twitter conversation (Lavrusik, 2010).

Another piece of advice for tweets is to not hash tag every word (Lavrusik, 2010). Hash tags (#) are meant to help others find tweets based on keywords in Twitter search (Lavrusik, 2010). Some users hash tag every word because they think their tweets will have more visibility in Twitter search. It does not improve a user's search results. Hash tagging every word just makes tweets hard to read. If users' tweets are popular, they may be showcased by Twitter search (Lavrusik, 2010).

Users should also avoid reposting tweets unless they are fixing errors from the original tweet (Lavrusik, 2010). Some users copy past tweets and repost them, sometimes within hours of the original tweet. Avoid posting the same tweet excessively in the same day or week (Lavrusik, 2010). This rule applies to tweets about the same topic, such as a commentary of a sports game (Lavrusik, 2010). Repost only if fixing errors in the original tweet (Lavrusik, 2010). Otherwise, followers may feel spammed.

Like Facebook etiquette, these etiquette guidelines focus on common courtesy. Do not fill up followers' feeds with unedited, sloppy, and redundant information. If users would not like to see it from those they follow, they should not force it on followers. Be considerate and insightful in posts and replies. Although users on Twitter may not be real friends, maintain a professional appearance because employers and clients may be able to see personal activity on this social website.

Google+

Google+ is a newly added feature for users with a Google account. An account can be created when users sign-up for a Gmail account, Google website services, or other Google features. This social website tries to mirror real-life interactions between people by allowing users to group contacts into circles. Circles help in filtering comment threads, streams, and information that specific users are allowed to see. Users can also use video chat, called "Hangout," to communicate with other users. Google+ offers users more privacy by allowing them to choose which activities specific groups are allowed to see and participate in. Facebook and Twitter offer limited features to do this. Google+ asks users to assign contacts to circles when they are first added and configure the access rights. The initial setup reduces a lot of time that may be spent later configuring a large network of contacts, which is a problem with Facebook and Twitter. Although this is a newer social network, it is still subject to general etiquette rules. The Google+ etiquette guidelines are based on seven features of Google+.

As with other social networking websites, users should think about what they are sharing. Comments, photos, and videos may not bother some followers, but it could bother others, especially those with other religions, cultures, and personalities (Zeeshan, 2011). It is normal to have an opinion, but it should not be forced on others. Before posting, target specific followers that will be interested in the post (Zeeshan, 2011). This will help reduce the amount of spam sent to other users. As with Twitter and Facebook, limit the amount of posts made in a day to avoid creating a lot of information for followers to sort through (Zeeshan, 2011). Also, post in the first person (Zeeshan, 2011). Followers can be discouraged when users constantly talk about

themselves in the third person. It is annoying when people incessantly talk about themselves in the third person in real life, so do not do it online.

As with Twitter guidelines, always give credit to the origin of the post when re-sharing information (Zeeshan, 2011). Mention the person or article in the post. It may also be helpful to other users to link to the source if possible (Zeeshan, 2011). Do not re-share right after the original user, but space out the timing of the repost (Zeeshan, 2011). Some followers might already follow the original user and may have already seen it. When re-sharing, comment on the post to give the original source some feedback or create feedback from followers (Zeeshan, 2011).

Comment threads on Google+ can be used for debates and feedback (Zeeshan, 2011). Think before commenting to avoid creating dissension among a lot of followers (Zeeshan, 2011). Do not attack any user for an opinion. Respond to questions and comments to give users feedback and answer their questions. If there are a lot of questions, try to answer them in a general comment that answers the majority (Zeeshan, 2011). Also, make relevant comments to the post. Unrelated conversations are more appropriately sent in a direct message. When agreeing with a comment or post, use the “+1” button to agree instead of posting a new comment that says basically the same thing (Zeeshan, 2011). This button works similar to Facebook’s “Like” button and can simplify a comment thread or alert followers to interests.

As mentioned before, Google+ allows users to connect by adding other users to circles of followers (Zeeshan, 2011). Unlike Facebook and Twitter, users can be added without approval from the other party (Zeeshan, 2011). It would be polite to leave an introductory message, but it is not required. Google+ did not require approval to allow users anonymity if they want to keep their identity and personal information hidden (Zeeshan, 2011). Users do not have to follow everyone that follows them, but they should at least take a little time to see who is following them (Zeeshan, 2011). Followers may know information that is interesting to the user, and they may want to add them.

Huddles and hangouts are features on Google+ that allow users to communicate to several other users at the same time. Huddles are on the Google+ app for the mobile platform (Zeeshan, 2011). A huddle is a group chat and can be easily misused. Before adding someone to a huddle, make sure they will be interested in the topic or they may never accept another huddle invitation (Zeeshan, 2011). Hangouts are video chat sessions and allow one to nine users in a single chat for free (Zeeshan, 2011). The same rules for face-to-face conversations apply to hangouts. Greet everyone in the chat and be polite and respectful. Do not interrupt unless necessary and do not talk over anyone. Allow others to talk so they do not have to interrupt constantly. Don’t yell at users, even if they are annoying; mute them if necessary (Zeeshan, 2011). Think before speaking to prevent unintentionally offending another user. Hangouts also have a chat box on the side to type comments (Zeeshan, 2011). As more people join a conversation, it can be hard to get a word in. Be polite and wait to speak, use the chat box if necessary, and be polite when leaving the conversation.

Google+ gives users a lot of freedom in the way they communicate, but Google does not want users advertising on Google+ (Zeeshan, 2011). Although Google is known for its advertising on its search engine and other features, the company wants Google+ to be strictly for socializing. Users have the freedom to post whatever they want, but Google warns that advertising on the network will not be effective marketing and users will just feel spammed (Zeeshan, 2011). Users may also report and block other users for advertising. If needed, put links in the “About” section of the user profile that link to jobs or businesses (Zeeshan, 2011). Users will notice them and click on them if they are interested (Zeeshan, 2011). As with Twitter and Facebook, avoid spamming users with excessive promotion.

In general, Google+ users need to be polite and respectful to other users. Many of the etiquette rules that apply to other social networking sites can be applied to Google+. Do not seek out users to degrade or defame them. Before tagging other users, think if they want to be associated with the post, picture, comment or other feature. If a user is being singled out by another user in a negative way, the user can always report the inconsiderate user to Google (Zeeshan, 2011). Fighting back can make the user look immature and ruin their reputation with other users, many that may not even know follow them. The best policy is to block the user to prevent further communication.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a special variation of social networking sites. This site is designed to be strictly a professional network for users. The website prides itself on having members from all of the Fortune 500 companies (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). Users can post articles and pictures along with many other features similar to the purely social network sites. However, users need to understand that this site is strictly for professional networking. Do not post embarrassing photos or information. LinkedIn also allows users to link their profile to their Twitter account. Unless users maintain social network profiles diligently to make sure they cast the most professional image, they should not link a social site to a professional one.

When users fill out their profile, they can add resume and reference information. Users can also enter education information, degree information, and past employment information. LinkedIn offers a job search features in which users can search jobs postings from employers directly on LinkedIn. Therefore, keep some information public when searching for a job. Because employers and professionals use LinkedIn, be very careful with posts. LinkedIn provides configuration options so users can allow certain connections to see information that other contacts cannot (LinkedIn, 2011). If users have a lot of connections, it may be difficult to manage specific settings, so they should develop a general policy about what information they share with all users.

If a professional has a LinkedIn account, it will be one of the first links on a Google search for their name, right before a link to their Google+ account. It is also a good idea for professionals to search their name on Google to see what kind of personal information is

available on their search results. Since LinkedIn is the most professional site, users should never leave their account logged-in when leaving a computer. If someone hacks their LinkedIn account to post inappropriate information, it will damage their reputation more than it would on Facebook, Twitter, or Google+. The following paragraphs describe etiquette guidelines for LinkedIn.

When creating an account, users are asked almost immediately to post a profile picture. Users do not have to post a picture, but they should follow guidelines if they do. For the most professional picture, hire a professional photographer to take a recent head shot in a business suit (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). Some users make the mistake of posting pictures with family, awkward poses, and bad lighting (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). LinkedIn can serve as an online business card and resume, so the profile picture should accurately represent the user as a professional (Executive MBA Programs, 2009).

Because LinkedIn is a professional social networking site, users may be caught by employers if they embellish or lie about resume or education information (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). Anyone can see a LinkedIn profile, even if the user configured the account settings to make the information private. Current and former coworkers, bosses, and professors can then see the profile and point out inconsistencies (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). Therefore, honesty is the best policy in maintain a professional reputation.

Besides providing accurate information, users should create a catchy headline for personal profiles to attract connections and employers (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). If a user is already employed, he or she still needs a catchy headline to attract other professionals. This headline will become a memorable summary of the user as a professional (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). It can also help employers and potential contacts search for a user based on characteristics and professions. LinkedIn provides help with creating catchy headlines.

As with purely social networking sites, professionals should maintain a balance of status Updates (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). Too many updates could spam contacts, and too few could give the impression that a user is not involved (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). Users should show their network that they are involved in something, but they should avoid several status updates per day (Executive MBA Programs, 2009).

Links can be a great way for users to show their connections which companies and activities they are involved in. LinkedIn profiles allow users to list up to three links to other sites (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). Instead of labeling these links “My Company” or “My Blog,” choose a creative name to entice viewers to click the links (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). LinkedIn also offer widgets to link to company and other websites (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). Make sure that all links are professional and take the viewer to a professional site.

LinkedIn also offers users a recommendation link. Asking for too many recommendations can make users seem needy (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). Include personal notes to inform connections why recommendations are needed and the type of recommendation needed (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). If a user requests a

recommendation, but that user feels they cannot provide a positive recommendation, he or she should politely refuse the request. It is up to the user whether they want to provide a reason.

LinkedIn users should also ask before asking for connection to mutual users (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). Since LinkedIn is a professional site, contacts will likely reject requests to users they do not know. Let the user know why the connection is being requested and assure them it will be a positive connection (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). Users can hurt others reputations if they make a bad impression on the mutual contact, so always maintain professional conduct on LinkedIn. When receiving requests, follow up with the person to make sure they can be trusted as a connection.

Besides the basic social network features, LinkedIn provides users with more job-related features. The profile page has a link to a job search listing and a link for employers to post jobs. LinkedIn also offers nine applications to its users: ReadingList by Amazon, Slideshare Presentations, Google, Blog Link by TypePad, Huddle Workspaces, box.net, company buzz, Tripit, and WordPress (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). Since the article was written, LinkedIn has added nine more applications, including a link to Twitter (LinkedIn, 2011). These apps help professionals stay informed, collaborate, and plan travel straight from their profile. Exercise caution in the apps and links used to ensure that the personal profile maintains a professional appearance because the website is easy to find from search engines.

When user search their names in a Google search, their LinkedIn profile is one of the first links in the results. Repeating words such as “sales” in a profile can improve search results in a Google search (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). Avoid using the same words incessantly in a profile to make it easier to read (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). If a user just adds the words to be more searchable, he or she is probably not adding much value to the profile. When contacts find users, they should be impressed with the profile, not detracted by the word “sales” all over the page.

Users should choose a unique, but memorable URL for a personal profile that contains information such as their name, occupation, or specialty into the link, such as BillAtStateFarm (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). When speaking to professionals without a pen or business card, a memorable URL will allow them to check out specific LinkedIn profiles (Executive MBA Programs, 2009). This is also helpful when connected to contacts with a lot of connections. If users have a memorable link, other professionals can find their profiles easily.

Since LinkedIn is a professional social network, it should be treated more professionally than Facebook, Twitter, and Google+. Communications should be conducted as they would be in a business environment. LinkedIn serves as an online business card, resume, and employer. Professionals need to make sure their profiles convey the most professional image and that their contacts also know how to behave professionally.

BeKnown

BeKnown is Monster.com's version of LinkedIn. BeKnown is an application that can be added to a user's profile on Facebook. The site offers space to add a summary, experience, skills, and interests. Users can also earn badges based on accomplishments, such as making connections and getting endorsements (recommendations) (Monster, 2011). Users can add connections, follow companies, and add companies. The application has a job listing link and a job posting link for employers (Monster, 2011). Users can invite contacts from Facebook, Twitter, Gmail, Yahoo!, and Windows Live (Monster, 2011). When first added to a Facebook account, users' Facebook profile pictures and job information from Facebook is automatically imported. This can be changed later while configuring the application (Monster, 2011). While this app seems to be a good competitor for LinkedIn, be aware that it is linked to Facebook accounts and the application can access all Facebook information.

Conclusion

Social networking has made it easier to make connections with people all over the world. Since its rise in popularity, users have forgotten their manners in using the websites. Remember to be polite and courteous to other users. If a person would not say it in real life, why would that person post it online for the whole world to see? Choose connections wisely and remember the differences between social and professional sites. Make the best impression on users for each website.

Looking, Speaking, and Behaving Professionally Summary

In order to project a professional image, people need to be aware that other professionals are not only judging them on their professional interactions, but also their social ones. Professional dress helps people to project a credible image and can also make them feel more confident. In the professional environment, it is very important to know the differences between professional, business casual, and casual attire to maintain a confident and credible image. Besides physical appearance, professionals need to know how to communicate intelligently. The professional environment can include interviews, employment, professional events, professional dinners, and information posted on the Internet. In order to project the most confident and credible image, professionals must know how to dress, speak, eat, and communicate professionally. All of these topics have been covered in this thesis to teach or reteach professionals how to handle specific situations and communication media in a professional environment.

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